

2022

Good Neighbor Team Overview

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What is a Good Neighbor Team

A Good Neighbor Team (GNT) is a small group of volunteers (preferably 6-8) from a local church or organization that partners with World Relief to welcome and walk alongside a newly arrived refugee family. We want each refugee who arrives in the US to feel the warm welcome of the local church and community. To accomplish this, GNTs will partner with World Relief to assist with practical resettlement tasks aimed at empowering the family to move towards self-sufficiency, while simultaneously building meaningful, long-lasting relationships.

Time and again, GNTs have found that, while refugees may have some significant needs as they first arrive and face the challenges of adjustment, they also can be an incredible blessing to the community that receives them. GNTs offer a way to facilitate these long-term, reciprocal relationships with new neighbors as they begin to build their home here. Through the experience of assisting a family or group of individuals, you will learn stories of courage, resilience, and renewed hope. You and your team will have the opportunity to build relationships that are lasting, promote human flourishing, and are mutually enriching.

By entering into a GNT agreement with World Relief, your team is committing to playing an integral part in the beginning of someone's new life in the US, humbly guiding your new neighbors as they journey toward self-sufficiency. Through a relationship marked by a spirit of mutual edification, you can expect to see personal growth in yourself and build lasting friendships.

Your service is an opportunity to help people in vulnerable situations as you would wish to be helped; and, for Christians, it is an active response to the biblical command to care for people in need.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart. —Zech. 7:9-10 ESV

Forming a Good Neighbor Team

One of the first activities for a GNT is to identify a Team Lead. This is someone who is able to commit to being available to provide ongoing support to their team and to be the point of contact for World Relief Staff.

Once a church or community group commits to forming a GNT, the Team Lead will collect the names and email address for each member and provide this list to the World Relief Staff. At this point, each member of the team who is not already a volunteer with World Relief, will go through our regular volunteer process. Either after or concurrently, depending on the availability of the GNT team members, World Relief Staff will walk the team through the GNT pre-arrival training process.

When putting together your GNT, make sure that there is at least one time in the week that all team members are consistently available. This will enable the Team Lead and World Relief Staff to schedule regular team trainings and meetings. It is also valuable to *have at least one person on the team who has daytime availability and access to a vehicle* so that they can provide transportation to appointments.

We strongly recommend that you include a pastor/leader of your church or community group in this process, even if they are not part of the GNT.

Who are Refugees

Refugees are forced to flee their homeland because of race, religion, nationality, social group, political persuasion, or armed conflict. We are not privy to the specific reasons they fled. This story may come up in conversation, however we don't recommend that the topic is pushed. Be sensitive and allow your relationship to develop and dictate the pace of disclosure.

More importantly, **refugees are survivors, leaders, and entrepreneurs who have so much to contribute to those of us who welcome and befriend them.** While refugees may also have some significant needs as they first arrive and face the challenges of adjustment, they can be an incredible blessing to the community receiving them.

Phases of a GNT

There are three general Phases of GNTs:

Pre-Arrival: Before a refugee family arrives in the U.S., there is a World Relief led training process for all GNTs. Once paired with a family, the GNT works with World Relief Staff to

prepare their house or apartment. In addition to gathering specific home furnishings and Item Kits, we encourage the GNT to commit to praying for this family's adjustment even before they arrive. In most cases, members of the GNT are also present when their refugee family arrives at the airport, offering a warm welcome and the promise of a new beginning.

Resettlement & Adjustment: During their first few months in the U.S., refugees have many appointments to schedule, orientations to attend, and things to learn. Some teams may assist with tasks like securing a state ID, teaching the family where and how to buy groceries, how to use public transportation, or even how to greet someone in English. Working through these tasks together empowers the family to move towards self-sufficiency, while reaffirming a sense of community and support as they adjust to life in the U.S.

Financial Support: We ask that each team partners with World Relief financially to support refugees and allow our organization to continue empowering the local church and community to welcome refugees. This commitment is not required and should never be a barrier to engaging as a Good Neighbor Team, but instead offers a great way to partner more effectively together.

Our Promise to You

While you serve as a GNT, you will see discipleship breakthroughs and “aha” moments that bring transformation into the lives of everyone involved. And as your team tangibly follows Jesus by welcoming the stranger (Matthew 25), loving your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10:27), and making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28), you will experience the Gospel lived, shared, and received in powerful ways.

Time Commitment

We ask for a six-month commitment with weekly visits to the refugee family.

Weekly time commitments for each team member may vary throughout the Good Neighbor Team experience, depending on the number of team members and needs of the refugee family.

Generally, Good Neighbor Teams will volunteer more during the pre-arrival, arrival day, and early part of the resettlement period, as these involve more administrative tasks and specific appointments or services.

Keep in Mind

Your time and friendship will mean more to your family than anything else you can give. *You are their friend and neighbor, not their Case Manager.* GNTs best honor refugees when they come with hands that are both ready to serve and open to receive. Continually ask yourself, “Would I do this for a friend, or not?”

Work With, Don’t Do For. In all situations, remember that the family you are partnered with are resilient and intelligent. They want to become self-sustainable and learn how to live life in America. When they come across a problem, empower them to reach out to their Case Manager, figure out how to solve it, or work through it *with* them, making sure to show/talk through every step of the process.

Avoid Assumptions. With only a small amount of biographical information on the refugees, it is important that you avoid making assumptions about the family you are going to welcome. Be ready to love and support whoever steps off the airplane as you fulfill the role God has called you to play in the refugee family’s life.

Take time to breathe and pray. The journey of a GNT can be challenging, but God has a plan for you and for this family. There will be bumps in the road, but we promise this adventure will be a rewarding one that will leave you with an abundance of stories and memories.

You are not alone in this. The staff at World Relief are here to facilitate the adjustment of the families, and are here to support your team to make sure your questions and concerns are addressed. At the end of the day, we all are learning from and teaching one another.

Application Process

In order to form a Good Neighbor Team, start by doing the following:

1. Gather 6-12 people interested in forming a Good Neighbor Team
2. Review the commitment with the entire team by reading through this document together
3. Select a Team Lead
4. Team Lead submits a Group Neighbor Team Interest Form and accompanying forms (See Appendix for forms)
5. The Volunteer Coordinator will send the Team Lead a next steps email with the remaining onboarding requirements
6. Team Lead will ask all members to complete the group member application, then send links for orientation videos, background check, and training. The Lead will track their progress
7. Team Lead submits a Good Neighbor Team Agreement

8. The World Relief Staff contact will sit down with the Team Lead to discuss the Good Neighbor Team Agreement and set up the first GNT Team training session

Training Process

Before you invest as a GNT in a relationship with a refugee family, World Relief wants to first invest in you. It is important to us that all team members feel ready and confident going into their Good Neighbor Team experience. The following trainings are provided for your team:

New Volunteer Onboarding for all World Relief Volunteers

1. [Volunteer Application](#)
2. [US Program E-Learning Volunteer Orientation](#) – This 45 minute online training provides a general orientation to World Relief, key services we provide, and policies we have
3. [Western NY Volunteer Orientation Trainings](#) - This 2 hour in person training walks through the history, philosophy, and practices of World Relief Western NY and also highlights our volunteer opportunities to help you find a role that aligns with your passions and empowers those we serve
4. Background Checks and Reference Checks

Good Neighbor Team Training

1. World Relief Primary Staff contact will sit down with the Team Lead to discuss the Good Neighbor Team Agreement and set up the first GNT Team training session
2. We will have pre-arrival trainings for all members of the GNT, covering the following topics
(Each training will last approx. 90 minutes and will be coordinated by the Team Lead):
 - a. Overview of GNT – purpose, responsibilities, team member roles, time commitments, tasks, skills, and communication
 - b. Overview of Casework, partner agencies, and support services
 - c. Cultural humility, trauma-informed care, and practice scenarios
 - d. Experiential learning (At least one volunteer serving opportunity, as well as Role-specific trainings will be completed by each member of the GNT sometime in the three-four weeks leading up to this meeting)
 - e. Follow-up on experiential learning activities
 - f. Q&A with World Relief Staff, decide GNT Tasks, fill in gaps in learning
3. Following the trainings, the GNT will confirm Volunteer Roles, create a Team Directory, and plan future meetings.
4. GNT will meet together day(s) before arrival to pray together and decide on next steps

Check-Ins

Remember, you are walking with us at World Relief as we all walk alongside the family. This means that even when our 90 day resettlement period is over, we are still here to resource, support, and encourage you. In addition to the as-needed conversations and talks, we will have three schedule check-ins throughout the six month period:

- 1st month check-in with leader(s)
- 3rd month case update and check-in with team
- 6th month debrief & evaluation with team

Team Agreement

Once the GNT and World Relief have agreed upon a specific refugee family to partner with, both parties will review and complete an agreement. The agreement includes basic biographical and contact information, as well as several lists of tasks to be completed. The Team Lead and World Relief Staff will together assign responsibility for the tasks based on the availability, skills, and passions of the Good Neighbor Team. We treat the agreement as a tool to facilitate clear communication and establish responsibility for both the Good Neighbor Team and World Relief.

Team Role Division

Many teams will divide responsibilities among members, ensuring everyone on the team gets involved and shares the workload. We find it best to assign a point person **to oversee each category that the Team agrees to help with**. The point person would then assure completion of the task that the team commits to which falls under their category.

Having one person that all team members refer to and share information with for each category also helps avoid confusion and unnecessary doubling of efforts by the team. Based on the size of the group, the level of responsibility within different categories and availability, some team members may oversee more than one category, and there may be categories that the team does not agree to engage in and therefore does not assign a point person.

Team Lead

- Help coordinate the GNT as a whole
- Assure team members are fulfilling their responsibilities
- Function as the primary contact for World Relief Staff
- Assure team members log volunteer time and donations
- Answer questions from GNT and church members, as able

- Set up initial communication channels in GNT Community and WhatsApp/Slack

Transportation Coordinator

- Primary point of contact for transportation to and from Doctors appointments, ESL classes, Dentist appointments, job interviews, etc.
- Teach use of public transportation
- Assist in securing driver's permits

Community Orientation Coordinator

- Primary point of contact for family getting acclimated to life in Rochester
- Help family learn where nearest laundromat is and explain how to use it, if necessary
- Plan fun visits to local parks, homes, public market, etc.
- Make sure family understands how to navigate the grocery store
- Help family acquire desired additional resources like library cards and bicycles

Education Coordinator (This is currently an optional role for GNTs)

- Assist adults with enrollment in ESL classes
- Assist parents with enrolling children in school
- Help arrange school bus or other transportation to-and-from school
- Tutor and/or arrange for tutors for ESL and/or children's schooling

Housing Coordinator (This is currently an optional role for GNTs)

- Help World Relief Staff find suitable housing
- Coordinate acquiring desired additional household furnishings and kits
- Attend Home cleaning and set-up
- Stock house with appropriate pre-arrival food

Employment Coordinator (This is currently an optional role for GNTs)

- Assist with creating job resume
- Assist with seeking out and preparing for employment opportunities
- Assist in setting up a bank account
- Teach family how to pay bills such as rent and utilities
- Coach family on budgeting, managing resources, and building credit history

Next Steps

Once you have decided a GNT is right for you, fill out and submit the following GNT Interest Form to the World Relief WNY with the pertinent information for each member of your team. The GNT Interest Form is not a binding document, so you can submit it without committing to a

GNT. Once you submit the GNT Interest Form, a member of the World Relief WNY staff will reach out to the Team Lead to set up a meeting to discuss what a GNT is and what your next steps are!

Good Neighbor Team Interest Form

Church/Organization	
Team Number (If a church has multiple teams)	
Church Address	
Lead Pastor Name & Email/Phone	
Church Staff Lead Name & Email/Phone (If there is one)	
Team Leader(s)	
Team Leader Phone Number(s)	
Team Leader Email (s)	

*** Please completely fill out this form with the pertinent information for each member of your team, scan it, and email it to the WR Staff.

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER